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LETTER DATED 23 DECEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF UKRAINE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit
herewith the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine concerning
the situation in Tajikistan (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be
circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Anatoli M. ZLENKO
Permanent Representative
of Ukraine



Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

In Tajikistan, on 20 December 1996, 70 kilometres east of Dushanbe, representatives of the Tajik opposition seized 21 hostages. They included representatives of the State structures of Tajikistan and seven United Nations military observers, among them Captain D. Sukharev, a national of Ukraine.

These actions have endangered the lives and safety of the persons seized, and constitute a gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ukraine is convinced that hostage-taking is an absolutely unacceptable means of attaining political objectives which will have an extremely negative impact on the entire process of national reconciliation in Tajikistan.

There is special concern in Ukraine over the dangerous actions directed against the United Nations international observers, which can be regarded as a challenge to the entire international community in the name of which they are performing their peacekeeping mission.

Ukraine calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all the persons seized, and for the international status of the United Nations peacekeepers to be strictly respected.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine is taking active diplomatic measures to secure the release of the Ukrainian national.

Kiev, 20 December 1996
